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ABSTRACT

A study conducted for the purpose of identifying some generally accepted principles and procedures found to be most effective and useful in County Agricultural Extension program planning is presented. A total of 13 principles were identified, including: (1) Program planning should be based on conditions that exist; (2) Program planning should be based on people's interests and needs; (3) Program planning should be viewed as an educational process; (4) Establishing definite objectives is an essential part of the planning process; (5) Program planning is a continuous process; (6) Effective program planning procedure is consistent with that used in a representative democracy; (7) Effective program planning should include local participation; (8) Program planning should enlist the aid of local agencies; (9) The County Extension program should be planned by the local people and the county staff; (10) A county Extension program must be based on adequate written long- and short-term plans; (11) Program planning should be flexible to permit adjustment to changing conditions; (12) Effective program planning develops local volunteer lay leadership; and (13) Well-formulated program planning will include and involve definite procedures for evaluation. Recommendations are made for further research. (Author/CK)

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A Research Summary of a Graduate Study

SOME PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES
USEFUL IN PLANNING
COUNTY EXTENSION PROGRAMS

By
Ankegowda Kapanigowda, Lewis H. Dickson,
and Robert S. Dotson

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SOME PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES USEFUL IN

PLANNING COUNTY EXTENSION PROGRAMS

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June 1961*

ABSTRACT

This library-type study was made for the purpose of identifying some generally accepted principles and procedures found to be most effective and useful in County Agricultural Extension program planning. Review of available published and unpublished literature permitted identification of thirteen main principles, including: 1) program planning should be based on conditions that exist; 2) program planning should be based on people's interests and needs; 3) program planning should be viewed as an educational process; 4) establishing definite objectives is an essential part of the planning process; 5) program planning is a continuous process; 6) effective program planning procedure is consistent with that used in a representative democracy; 7) effective program planning should include local participation; 8) program planning should enlist the aid of local agencies; 9) the county Extension program should be planned by the local people and the county staff; 10) a county Extension program must be based on adequate written long- and short-term plans;

*Date of completion of an M.S. degree thesis by Ankegowda on which this summary is based.

11) program planning should be flexible to permit adjustment to changing conditions; 12) effective program planning develops local volunteer lay leadership, and 13) well-formulated program planning will include and involve definite procedure for evaluation.

Apparently no one set planning procedure has been followed by Extension workers in the United States. Planning procedures must be flexible and adjustable to fit state and local situations if they are to be based on the interests and needs of Extension's clientele. Procedures used, then, should be in harmony with the planning principles found to be true. The importance of agreement among the Extension staff and local people on the procedures to be followed in conducting program planning at the county level was recognized.

Recommendations were made for further research in the areas related to program development and study committee involvement in planning local county long-range Extension programs.

RESEARCH SUMMARY*

I. INTRODUCTION

Program planning is considered by educators to be one of the essential steps prerequisite to performance of any effective educational work. The Agricultural Extension Service is an educational agency that serves large audiences in many and varied areas of interest. In earlier years, county Extension problems were relatively simple. As Extension educational activities increased to meet the needs and interests of the people, it became more and more difficult for a county staff to visit all of the farmers and homemakers individually. Very soon Extension workers realized the need for involving representative, local volunteer lay people in their program planning so that Extension's message might reach larger numbers of people in a shorter time.

In its beginning, Extension work was basically concerned with the improvement of agriculture; whereas, today a county Extension program includes many other related aspects of broad socio-economic significance to rural people. Such problems usually cannot be tackled in isolation, but must be tackled by means of a coordinated approach involving all agencies and organizations properly concerned. Long-range county Extension program planning can be a means of involving people to make joint decisions necessary to the development of sound county Extension programs.

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II. PURPOSES

Since it is generally agreed that the decision-making process can best be used when planning principles and procedures are well-formulated and clearly stated, the purposes of the present study were: 1) to identify some generally-accepted principles of planning that might be useful in formulating the county agricultural Extension program; 2) to specify the responsibilities of different categories of people concerned in long-range county Extension program planning; and 3) to develop some suggested procedures for program planning. A library-type of study was initiated to these ends. The work of eight authors was considered.*

III. FINDINGS

General

Extension's educational responsibilities in county Extension program planning were found to include: 1) developing the people's interest in recognition of significant problems; 2) advising with them to assure that

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they select the best ways and means for solving major problems identified, and 3) stimulating them to take appropriate action in accordance with the decisions they themselves have reached.

Study of the history of long-range county Extension program planning revealed that, in the beginning of Extension work, the program of the county agent was largely predetermined. During later years, attempts were made to involve representative people in program planning. It was during 1955-1956 that an improved, scientific method of long-range program planning came into being. Program projection, as it was called, was a process for county program decision-making. Generally-accepted steps involved were found to include: 1) consideration of available resources; 2) analysis of the present situation; 3) identification of major problems; 4) determination of priorities, goals and objectives; 5) consideration and comparison of promising alternative ways of reaching objectives; 6) choice and application of the optimum alternatives, and 7) evaluation and periodic revision of the 5-year plan or plan of work projection (POWP) as needed so it might serve as a guide to educational work directed toward stated program objectives. Program planning was considered as being a process that should be done periodically and in such a way as to encourage creative and critical thinking in keeping with the goals selected. Such a method was found to be commonly referred to as the "problem solving approach." To be most effective, it was felt the Extension educational planning process should place emphasis on people's abilities to think and make wise decisions rather than on their ability to achieve progress on a specific project which might or might not be of high priority. Long-range planning's fundamental prupose, then, was to teach persons how to think and not necessarily what to think.

If this purpose were achieved, the principles and procedures used might be said to have been reasonably effective. A 5-year plan so derived should guide the county staffs and others concerned in the planning, execution and evaluation of Extension's educational program.

Planning Principles

With a view to identifying some generally-accepted principles, written statements concerning useful principles of program planning made by eight Extension educators and theorists prior to 1962 were reviewed. Principles cited in the writings were classified and selected. Finally, the following list of thirteen principles was developed:

1. Program planning should be based on conditions that exist.
2. Program planning should be based on people's interests and needs.
3. Program planning should be viewed as an educational process.
4. Establishing definite objectives is an essential part of the planning process.
5. Program planning is a continuous process.
6. Effective program planning procedure may be viewed as being consistent with that used in a representative democracy.
7. Effective program planning should include local participation.
8. Program planning should enlist the aid of local agencies.
9. The county Extension program should be planned by the local people and the county staff.
10. To be most effective, a county Extension program should be based on adequate written long- and short-term plans.
11. Program planning should be flexible to permit adjustment to changing conditions.

12. Effective program planning develops local volunteer lay leadership.
13. Well-formulated program planning will include and involve definite procedure for evaluation.

Theorists were in agreement that due recognition and proper use of these principles should assure the development of superior county Extension planning documents and programs.

Organization For Planning

Organizational structure was found to be viewed as an important key to effective program planning at county, area, district and state levels. County level organization for planning was seen as not being the only one that contributed to effective county program planning.

Thus, organizations at the community level and state level also were considered helpful and necessary. Community level organizations were considered by many to provide the best opportunity for adequate representation of the people so as to identify and cope with their needs and interests. These last organizations were found to have relatively great influence on the people of a local community. As a result, many counties have attempted to involve such groups in program planning at the county level. Three of the most important planning organizations found to exist at the community level were: 1) home demonstration clubs; 2) 4-H clubs, and 3) organized communities. Organization at the county level was found to vary widely from county to county throughout the United States. Two types of legal bodies were found to be most frequently included in program work at the county level, namely: 1) the legal county Extension

organization responsible for financing and execution of the program and to which all matters must be submitted, and 2) advisory, planning and operational committees, which develop programs (including planning, execution and evaluation), make recommendations and follow them through each year.

In addition to legally-appointed bodies such as those mentioned above, there were found to be other county-wide advisory groups commonly referred to as project committees, program development committees or other similar terms.

At the state level, two types of organizational structure seemed to be most common: 1) a commitee of farmers representing different types of farming people, and 2) a committee of Extension administrators.

State organizations were found to be concerned mainly with coordination of different agencies at their various levels, and in making provisions for writing a guide to program planning to be used by Extension workers at the county level.

Program Planning Roles

Since organizations are living entities made up of people and since it has been found that better county working relationships and more effective Extension planning results when everyone involved understands his role, proper roles were studied in the literature available.

The director or dean of each Extension Service at the state level was found to typically help the planning process by formulating policies and programs to be used in fulfilling general aims and policies of the Cooperative Extension Service. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF MEMBERS IN PROGRAM PLANNING*

Responsibility Stated	I[a]	II[b]	III[c]	IV[d]	V[e]
1. Define and interpret Extension policies and legal limitations.	XX[f]	X[g]			
2. Take necessary steps required for expanding the programs	XX	X			
3. Develop program planning philosophy	XX	XX	X	X	
4. Help initiate program planning procedures	XX	XX			
5. Assist in developing and establishing organization techniques that provide opportunities for people to take part at neighborhood, county and state level		XX	X	X	
6. Assist staff in determining type of background information needed for program planning		XX	X		
7. Direct and assist with agent training program procedures.		XX	X		
8. Participate in and/or observe program planning meetings		X	X	XX	X
9. Study and analyze programs		XX	X	XX	X
10. Assist in correlating county programs with state and federal programs.		X	XX		
11. Help staff members to assume their roles in program planning and to organize work to facilitate program planning.	XX	XX	X		
12. Help evaluate effectiveness of county and state program planning procedures.		XX	X	X	

TABLE 1. (Continued)

Responsibility Stated	I	II	III	IV	V
13. Help make program planning a continuous educational process		XX	X	X	
14. Give leadership by providing background information and trends on current, state, national, and international development in subject-matter field.		X	XX	X	
15. Help staff members see relation of each subject-matter field, to family living and improved agriculture	X	X			
16. Awaken interest and widen vision of people to opportunities for better family living and improved agriculture		XX	XX	X	
17. Assist in preparation of devices and techniques to discover interests, needs and problems		X	XX	X	
18. Discover basic problems of people		X	X	XX	X
19. Develop county plans of work			X	XX	X
20. Analyze county program to arrive at state plan of work		X	XX	XX	
21. Evaluate program planning procedures		XX	X	X	X
22. Provide opportunity for all socio-economic groups and geographic areas for representation in program planning		X	X	XX	X
23. Determine extent and intensity of interest in problems before including in program				XX	X

TABLE 1. (Continued).

Responsibility Stated	I	II	III	IV	V
24. Help interpret program to local groups				XX	X
25. Participate in planning and carrying out program				XX	X

*Adapted from Report of Home Demonstration Leaders' Workshop. Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University, 1948, p. 176.

a. I - Director
b. II - Supervisors and state leaders
c. III - Specialists
d. IV - County Extension Agents
e. V - Local people
f. X - Major responsibility
g. XX - Minor responsibility

Supervisors usually help in the planning by : 1) guiding county groups, concerning procedures to be used in program planning and in assuring proper coordination with other agencies; 2) analyzing county programs in terms of the relative significance of problems identified, and 3) assisting in the working out of clear and comprehensive sets of objectives.

Specialists normally provide educational leadership in given subject-matter fields. They aid each county staff and the district supervisors in: 1) analyzing and interpreting the factual information in their fields; 2) identifying problems, and 3) arriving at specific recommendations for reaching objectives. Their first obligation is to train the field staff and to provide assistance and material for them as required.

The county Extension worker is primarily responsible for all of the activities of the county. This role in program planning is that of organizing and teaching. They assume leadership for initiating county program planning. They are teachers and advisers since they must educate the program planning groups in the use of effective principles and procedures of program development. They are the central people responsible for program planning at the county Extension level.

Volunteer leaders involved in the long-range county Extension program planning (and development) process may represent all kinds of organized groups, including people from the ranks of existing leaders of political and factional groups, representatives of public and private agencies, members of county governing boards, community leaders and representatives of various popluation groups. Such leaders should have

abilities to supply needed information, make necessary interpretation and clarify facts. They should be informed that they have contributions to make and that their planning efforts will be meaningful, worthwhile and rewarding. The role of local volunteer lay people in program projection should be made clear to them ahead of time. They may be assigned specific responsibilities in their specific areas of interest.

The degree to which Extension planning will be successful depends largely on the working relationships within the organizations discussed above at the various levels.

Long-range Extension program planning has proven to be successful wherever the foregoing principles have been properly recognized and applied.

Planning Procedures

The procedures to be used for successful program planning are seen to be as important as the planning principles themselves. Procedures used should be properly oriented so as to take into account the recognized planning principles, if effective program planning is to be expected to result. It was found that there was no one set pattern followed in Extension program planning in the United States. Though different methods were developed or adopted for use to meet local conditions, certain well-established steps were found to be the most effective in long-range Extension program planning at the county level.

The step-by-step procedure listed below was developed to include those steps generally recommended by Extension educators and theorists.

1. Step No. 1: Extension workers at the state and county levels must agree upon:

a) a general philosophy regarding Extension program development, including planning, execution and evaluation.

b) a general policy and procedure to be followed.

2. Step No. 2: They should agree on their proper responsibilities with respect to program projection.

3. Step No. 3: They should enlist the aid of the Agricultural Extension Committee (Advisory Committee) and use members where practicable as the nucleus for formation of informal program development or study committees.

4. Step No. 4: Extension workers should be acquainted with people individually and in groups, and collect facts about the people, the local situation and important trends. Pertinent state and national information also should be assembled.

5. Step No. 5: They should identify local leaders, explain long-range program planning to them and obtain their support.

6. Step No. 6: They should plan, call and conduct the first meeting of the program development or study committees to consider the following items:

a) making purposes, roles and responsibilities of local leaders clear to them

b) analyzing the overall situation and trends and discussing problems based on data collected. They also should make use of the advice of specialists in analyzing the situation

c) forming study committees depending upon people's areas of interest, and taking into account the main areas of Extension program emphasis

d) planning future meetings of the study committee for definite assignments, times and places.

7. Step No. 7: See that study committee meetings are held and provide them with necessary materials and help so that major problems will be identified and priority objectives stated.

8. Step No. 8: Study committee should report the program development committee, or its executive committee (chairmen of study committees). Report should be reviewed, discussed and adopted, modified or rejected by the general committee.

9. Step No. 9: Extension workers should take the leadership in assembling and revising study committee reports into a county Extension 5-year plan or plan of work projection (POWP).

10. Step No. 10: Five-year plan should be approved by the Program Development Committee (or its representatives).

11. Step No. 11: Extension staff takes responsibility to revise, duplicate and distribute final copies of the 5-year plan.

12. Step No. 12: Meetings of study committees and Extension staff should be held periodically and annually as needed to revise separate sections of the 5-year plan and to select priority 5-year objectives to be pursued for each given year. The 5-year plan thus becomes the strong basis on which annual

planning, carrying out of the plan and program evaluation will rest as the period for which the 5-year plan was designed and written unfolds.

It is hoped that Extension workers everywhere may find the long-range county Extension program planning principles and procedures identified and discussed in this study helpful as they work together toward the common Extension goal of developing people to the end that they may learn to solve their own problems in the areas of program emphasis for which Extension has been given educational responsibility.

Recommendations for further research in the area of long-range county Extension program planning

It has been seen from this study that local committees and organizations necessarily play important parts in making long-range county Extension program planning successful. Relatively little research has been conducted thus far concerning the roles and responsibilities and selection and training of advisory, program development and study committees. Therefore, based on the findings of this review, further study is recommended in the following specific areas:

1. To determine the proper roles and responsibilities of such committees.
2. To learn which factors should be considered in selecting committee members.
3. To determine whether it might be more desirable for members of such committees to be elected or appointed, and by whom.
4. To determine the length of time committee members should serve.

5. To consider factors related to the training of committee members.
6. To discover which interest groups would be of greatest help and should be properly represented on committees.
7. To identify factors to be considered in determining the size of committees.
8. To learn which factors should be considered in replacing committee members.

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APPENDIX

TABLE II

PROGRAM - PLAN OF WORK - PROGRAM EVALUATION*

Program Statement	Annual Plan of Work	Program Evaluation and Annual Reports
A statement of the problems to be undertaken, and the general objectives to be achieved	A definite outline of specific changes to be developed in people and the procedure for accomplishment	Scientific process of determination if objectives are reached
1) Problems - state of situations which require change, have significance to people and can be resolved through planned educational effort	1) Problems - problems identified in the program	1) Problems - Decide which problem(s) are to be evaluated
2) General objectives - statements of what is to be accomplished in regard to the problems in terms of peopl concerned	2) General objectives - Based on the problems with program	2) General objectives to be achieved - select which objects are to be evaluated
3) The kind of change to be developed with the people and content or subject-matter areas in which to cause it to operate	3) Who is to be reached - Identification of the groups or particular people concerned with each of the various problems	3) Who has been reached - Identify the groups or particular people reached and could be expected to make changes
	4) Specific objectives or changes to be achieved - Delineation of all the specific educational changes necessary to the	4) Specific objectives or changes achieved - Select and defining the specific objectives, or changes studied

TABLE II
(Continued)

Program Statement	Annual Plan of Work	Program Evaluation and Annual Reports
	accomplishment of the general objectives for each of the problems in the program.	
	5) Information or subject matter needed - Selection of the vital and important subject matter that is essential for each problem in order to help the people accomplish their objectives	5) Information or subject matter taught - Identify the specific information or subject matter taught
	6) Teaching methods, techniques and materials to be used - Choice of methods, techniques and maerials appropriate for the people concerned and the objectives to be accomplished for each problem in the program	6) Teaching methods, techniques and devices used - Describe the particular methods, techniques and materials actually used
	7) Calendar of work - Determination of when each activity or job is to be done	7) Calendar of work - Review when each activity or job was done

*Adapted from J. Neil Raudabaugh, "Program-Plan of Work-Program Evaluation," Extension Service Review, Vol. 26 (September 1955), pp. 180-181.

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